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ABSTRACT

Small businesses can participate in a variety of partnerships with the educational community that can result in benefits to all partners. Examples of successful school-business partnerships in Arizona include the Aquafria Foundation in Evandale; the partnership among the University of Arizona, Pueblo High School, and the Puma County-State Bar Association; and the Tucson Unified School District Adopt-a-School Program. The benefits to be derived by a small business from participation in such a partnership with the local educational community are many--increased visibility and an improved image, increased teamwork among employees, and a better educated pool of potential employees. Partnerships between a small business and a local school can take any one of a number of forms, including administering a volunteer program to furnish teacher aides, sponsoring a reading or math contest and furnishing a company service or product as the prize, and conducting an educational enrichment activity such as a plant tour. To ensure a successful educational partnership, members of the partnership should set realistic goals that are agreeable to all involved, should be specific as to program methodologies and durations, and should work to keep the lines of communication among parties open at all times. (MN)

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SPEECH BY T. H. BELL

U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

WHITE HOUSE CHALLENGE FORUM FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

TUCSON, ARIZONA -- SEPTEMBER 26, 1984 -- 11:00 A.M.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD MORNING. IT IS MY PLEASURE TO BE HERE IN TUCSON TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS IMPORTANT EVENT FOR THE CONTINUED SUCCESS AND WELL-BEING OF OUR NATION. THIS IS THE FIRST OF THREE WHITE HOUSE CHALLENGE FORUMS AIMED AT STIMULATING SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION IN PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES. TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU THE WAYS THAT YOU AND YOUR BUSINESSES CAN INCREASE YOUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR COMMUNITIES AND ALSO THE MANY BENEFITS THAT CAN COME TO YOUR ORGANIZATIONS FROM THIS INVOLVEMENT. MY FOCUS WILL BE MAINLY ON THE KINDS OF PARTNERSHIPS THAT CAN BRING THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TOGETHER FOR THE GOAL OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS.

THREE GREAT FORCES ARE NOW SURGING THROUGH AMERICAN EDUCATION: FIRST, THE EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL REFORM MOVEMENT; SECOND, THE RELATED RETURN OF EDUCATIONAL CONTROL TO THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHERE IT BELONGS; AND THIRD, THE INCREASING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF AMERICAN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO IMPROVING EDUCATION.

EDUCATION REFORM HAS BECOME ONE OF THE LEADING ISSUES ON OUR NATIONAL AGENDA. THERE HAS BEEN A GENUINE AWAKENING TO THE REALIZATION THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATING OUR YOUTH LIES NOT ONLY IN THE HANDS OF THE EDUCATORS, BUT ALSO IN THE HANDS OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN THE FUTURE OF OUR SOCIETY.

I HAVE BEEN VERY PLEASED THUS FAR WITH THE RESPONSE OF THE ARIZONA PRIVATE SECTOR IN FORMING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE ARIZONA EDUCATION COMMUNITY. I'D LIKE TO TOUCH BRIEFLY ON A COUPLE OF YOUR OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES:

THE AQUAFRIA FOUNDATION -- EVANDLE, ARIZONA

NOW INTO ITS FOURTH YEAR, THE AQUAFRIA FOUNDATION IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN 40 PRIVATE FIRMS AND CONCERNED EDUCATORS AND CITIZENS. AT THE CONCLUSION OF EACH YEAR, THE EVANDALE TEACHERS NOMINATE THOSE PEERS WHOSE WORK THEY JUDGE TO BE OUTSTANDING. THEIR JUDGEMENTS ARE PASSED TO AN INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE WHICH INCLUDES CITIZENS AND THE SUPERINTENDENT AS AN EX-OFFICIO MEMBER. BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS COMMITTEE, THE AQUAFRIA AWARD CASH PRIZES OF $1,200. LAST YEAR THERE WERE 8 RECIPIENTS.

PARTNERSHIPS OF PUEBLO HIGH SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA/PIMA COUNTY-STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

PUEBLO HIGH SCHOOL HAS RECEIVED OVER 3,000 HOURS OF TUTORIAL TIME FROM SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA. THIS HIGH SCHOOL WHICH IS 90% MINORITY AND 87% HISPANIC HAS BENEFITED IMMENSELY FROM THE MATH, SCIENCE AND ENGLISH ASSISTANCE OF APROXIMATELY 25 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SINCE THIS PROGRAM WAS STARTED IN 1983. ALSO, THE PIMA COUNTY-STATE BAR ASSOCIATION HAS CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MOCK-TRIAL CLUB. THIS CLUB PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN A BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEGAL SYSTEM. THE IMPACT OF THESE PARTNERSHIPS HAS BEEN TREMENDOUS -- SINCE THEY WERE STARTED, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED AND CONTINUED THEIR EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HAS INCREASED BY SEVERAL HUNDRED PERCENT.

TUCSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM

RIGHT HERE IN TUCSON YOU HAVE AN OUTSTANDING ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM AND I CONGRATULATE ALL OF YOU WHO ARE INVOLVED WITH IT. THE PROGRAM HAS FIFTEEN LOCAL SCHOOLS PARTNERED WITH SEVENTEEN LOCAL BUSINESSES IN A PROGRAM MODELED AFTER MANY SIMILAR CORPORATE RELEASE-TIME VOLUNTEER EFFORTS. STUDENTS ARE LEARNING THINGS LIKE HOW TO WRITE A RESUME, HOW TO PRESENT THEMSELVES IN A JOB INTERVIEW, HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR MONEY AND OTHER INVALUABLE SKILLS THROUGH THESE PARTNERSHIPS. BUT IN ADDITION TO THE OBVIOUS BENEFITS TO STUDENTS, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS ALSO REAPING THE REWARDS OF THESE PARTNERSHIPS.

WHY SHOULD SMALL BUSINESS FORM PARTNERSHIPS?

ROBERT V. FOSSAN, CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE MUTUAL BENEFIT LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY HAD THIS ANSWER:

"IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE 14 MILLION SMALL BUSINESSES IN THIS NATION AND THERE ARE 600,000 NEW FIRMS BEING CREATED EACH YEAR. TOGETHER, THEY EMPLOY NEARLY HALF OF THE NATION'S WORKFORCE. GIVEN THIS LEVEL OF RESOURCES AS WELL AS THE ABILITY OF MOST SMALL FIRMS TO QUICKLY RESPOND TO A COMMITMENT FROM THE TOP, SMALL BUSINESSES ARE A MAJOR POTENTIAL RESOURCE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN SOLVING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS."

THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON PRIVATE INITIATIVES, LOOKED AT A DIFFERENT ASPECT:

"THERE ARE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS WHO MAKE THE PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS A SPECIAL NEED. UNHAMPERED BY THE BUREAUCRACY OF THE LARGER FIRM, THE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER CAN MOVE MORE SPONTANEOUSLY. THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH WORKERS ARE LIKELY TO BE CLOSER THAN IN THE LARGE COMPANY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES MAY BE MORE READILY TAPPED."

WE ARE NOT JUST ASKING BUSINESSES TO FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS BECAUSE IMPROVING THEM IS NATIONAL PRIORITY, OR BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR NATIONS HISTORY, THIS CURRENT GENERATION HAS NOT HAD A BETTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY THAN THE LAST.

THE NATION IS CALLING ON YOU TO ALSO MAKE AN <u>INVESTMENT</u> WHICH IS JUSTIFIED IN PURELY BUSINESS TERMS. THE PAYBACK FOR YOUR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IS IN THE SCHOOLS THAT SERVE THE AREAS WHERE YOU OPERATE. YOUR PAYBACK OR PROFIT EMERGES FROM THE SCHOOLS THAT DEVELOP THE SKILLS YOU NEED, IN REDUCED TRAINING COSTS, BETTER WORK HABITS AND DISCIPLINE, HIGHER QUALITY, AND BETTER SERVICE FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS. AT THE SAME TIME YOUR INVOLVEMENT CAN HELP CHALLENGE, MOTIVATE AND DIRECT YOUNG PEOPLE, HELPING TO REDUCE THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE, VANDALISM, DELINQUENCY AND SERIOUS CRIME WHICH UNDERCUT THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT.

A COMMUNITY THAT IS HEALTHY AND THRIVING IS GOOD FOR YOUR BUSINESS, IT IS A KEY FACTOR IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR BUSINESS.

AS THE WALL STREET JOURNAL NOTED IN A FRONT PAGE STORY THIS PAST SUMMER, MORE AND MORE COMPANIES ARE STARTING TO SEE THAT IT'S IN THEIR ENLIGHTENED SELF INTEREST TO SUPPORT NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEERISM.

WE ARE CONVINCED THAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS WITH YOUR LOCAL SCHOOLS IS ONE OF YOUR BEST OPPORTUNITES FOR A LONG TERM INVESTMENT YOU COULD POSSIBLY MAKE NOW.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF SOME OF THE BENEFITS YOUR BUSINESS MIGHT REALIZE FROM THIS PARTNERSHIP COULD INCLUDE:

- o INCREASED CORPORATE VISIBILTY AND A BETTER IMAGE IN THE COMMUNITY.
- o IMPROVED EMPLOYEE MORALE, I.E., MORE LOYAL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYEES.
- o INCREASED TEAMWORK AMONG EMPLOYEES FOLLOWING TEAMWORK FOR THE COMMUNITY.
- o HIGHER QUALITY OF NEW EMPLOYEES.
- o BUSINESS PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND POLICIES ARE BETTER UNDERSTOOD.
- o EASE OF HIRING NEW EMPLOYEES.
- o A BETTER EDUCATED COMMUNITY CAN MEAN A MORE PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY WITH A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE. THIS WILL ATTRACT POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT BY INVOLVING YOUR BUSINESSES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SCHOOLS, NOT ONLY WILL STUDENTS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A HIGHER QUALITY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND YOUR BUSINESS WILL HAVE FULFILLED ITS COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY --

THIS TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP CAN ALSO HAVE A MATERIAL EFFECT ON YOUR BUSINESS.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIPS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER COULD INCLUDE:

- o ADMINISTERING A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM TO FURNISH TEACHERS AIDS OR TUTORS DRAWN FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES.
- o SPONSORING A READING OR MATH CONTEST WITH THE PRIZES BEING THE DONATED PRODUCT OR SERVICE OF YOUR COMPANY.
- o DONATE, EITHER ALONE OR IN CONCERT WITH OTHER BUSINESSES, TO A MASTER TEACHER STIPEND TO HELP ATTRACT AND HOLD GOOD TEACHERS IN THE SYSTEM.
- o PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT THROUGH PLANT TOURS, OR CAREER COUNSELLING BY YOUR SKILLED WORKERS AND PROFESSIONALS TO HELP STUDENTS SEE THE "RELEVANCY" OF BASIC SILLS AND THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO PREPARE THEMSELVES.

THESE ARE JUST A FEW SUGGESTIONS, THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE LIMITLESS.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR FORMING A PARTNERSHIP

WHILE THERE IS NO ONE FORMULA TO INSURE A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO CONSIDER IN STARTING A PARTNERSHIP:

- o TALK WITH LOCAL TEACHERS AND STAFF TO ASSESS THE NEEDS OF EACH SCHOOL;

- o KEEP IN MIND THAT COMMITMENT FROM ALL PARTNERS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IS ESSENTIAL. KEEP THOSE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN AT ALL TIMES;
- o SET REALISTIC GOALS WHICH ARE AGREEABLE TO ALL THOSE INVOLVED. IT IT BETTER TO START OUT SMALL AND THEN EXPAND ONCE THE PROGRAM IS OPERATING SUCCESSFULLY;

- o BE SPECIFIC ABOUT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, METHODOLOGY AND DURATION. THIS SPECIFICITY WILL ALLOW THE PARTNERS AND THE COMMUNITY TO JUDGE PROGRESS AND PURPOSE QUICKLY AND EASILY.

- o DESIGNATE AN INDIVIDUAL FROM EACH SCHOOL WHO IS WILLING TO ACT ON DAY TO DAY PROBLEMS. DESIGNATE AN INDIVIDUAL FROM YOUR COMPANY TO BE THE LIAISON WITH THE PARTNER SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY.

CONCLUSION

AMERICAN EDUCATORS ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN THE MOST MASSIVE REFORM MOVEMENT IN YEARS. YOU WILL FIND THEM OPEN TO YOUR INTEREST AS NEVER BEFORE. PRESIDENT REAGAN SAID LAST OCTOBER THAT EVERY ONE OF OUR 110,000 SCHOOLS SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST ONE PARTNERSHIP. I WOULD LIKE TO CHALLENGE EACH ONE OF YOU HERE TODAY TO SEE THAT EVERY ONE OF THE SMALL BUSINESSES IN THIS STATE BECOMES INVOLVED IN A PARTNERSHIP IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS.

YOU CAN HELP YOUNG PEOPLE PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE RAPIDLY CHANGING ECONOMY, AND AT THE SAME TIME HELP ASSURE THAT YOU HAVE A STABLE, HEALTHY BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT.

I'LL BE HAPPY TO TRY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.